Program Management Committee

Issue Brief: 2-5

Managing Priority Countries

9 May 2017

CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food-secure future. The CGIAR Research Program on Livestock provides research-based solutions to help smallholder farmers, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists transition to sustainable, resilient livelihoods and to productive enterprises that will help feed future generations. It aims to increase the productivity of livestock agri-food systems in sustainable ways, making meat, milk and eggs more available and affordable across the developing world. The Program brings together five core partners: the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) with a mandate on livestock; the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), which works on forages; the International Center for Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), which works on small ruminants and dryland systems; the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) with expertise particularly in animal health and genetics and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) which connects research into development and innovation and scaling processes.

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**Livestock CRP**

**Managing Priority Countries**

**The Issue**

The concept of integrating the CRP’s efforts in selected value chains and countries adopted as part of the Livestock & Fish CRP approach is being carried forward into the Livestock CRP, but expanded to include both selected value chains and ‘systems’ in nine priority countries. We now need to begin clarifying how this will be implemented. In doing so, we must be conscious of the weaknesses that emerged in implementing the approach during L&F, as noted in both our internal and external evaluations. The purpose of this brief is to highlight key issues to be addressed and discuss possible strategies.

**Initial brainstorming**

An initial set of issues relate to:

* Defining the focus within priority countries:
  + Do we maintain selected value chains and systems?
  + How do we define a focus system?
  + Do we maintain the ambition for an integrated approach to design interventions, or allow for thematic focus, e.g. a country where the main focus is on environmental sustainability?
* Justifying the selection of the priority countries / value chains / systems:
  + Do we require business cases and analysis of relevant domains (national, regional)?
* Visioning an ideal country configuration:
  + Can we describe what we expect a successful focus country engagement to be? (role of country coordinator, team composition, portfolio of projects and funding, link to flagships), or would this be too prescriptive?
* Managing investment:
  + Achieving convincing momentum across countries varies. Do we need to set principles and criteria for deciding limits on incubation investment and when investment in a country is not yielding adequate returns and should be discontinued?
  + Is it useful to define different categories of priority countries so that we can manage investment and M&E expectations?
* Organizational strategy:
  + Embedding the country programs as a flagship under L&F had some advantages, but also many disadvantages. Do we continue with the current configuration of having the country coordinator role sit at the CRP management level, and all research time of the coordinator and the teams in-country as part of flagship activities?
  + Should flagship ownership and stricter accountability for contributing to the country programs and meeting their targets as core to flagship outcomes and targets be a clear expectation?
  + Is it better to cultivate a collective responsibility for all priority countries focused on flagships managing their contribution to country-level outcomes and targets, rather than the earlier focus in L&F on a lead partner institution?
* Improving the link between flagship and country work
  + Would joint responsibility, achieved through joint development and sign off on flagship and country SIPs, reviewed by PMC and ISC, be sufficient to encourage a higher degree of flagship engagement at country level?
  + Would it be worthwhile to track flagship activity/investment in priority countries and use as a criterion for adjusting W1/2 allocations?

**Supporting the country teams**

To improve implementation of the priority country concept, a concerted effort is being made to coordinate support to the country teams. This will be led by the Performance & Partnership Manager and involve several others. Activities are expected to include:

* Facilitating the country coordinator and team in developing their SIP
* Rolling out the M&E system at country level with the country team
* Conducting rapid assessments on gender, youth, capacity development, business development, links to A4NH food safety. These are intended to inform the formulation/updating of CRP-level strategies, but also directly inform country-specific strategies in consultation with the country teams.
* Strengthening partnership engagement and management, including some key skills and techniques such as facilitation
* Strengthening research design through closer review of country research activities and harmonizing across countries
* Also under consideration: enhancing interdisciplinarity through team-building and research techniques

**Action**

For brainstorming to inform more detailed proposals.

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Annex: Livestock CRP Proposal sections related to priority countries

## 1.0.6 Program structure and flagship projects

The program’s approach also fosters such integration, and mirrors the Livestock and Fish CRP approach to focus and integrate its value chain work for particular commodities in priority countries, particularly for rapid growth trajectories. It will extend to selected sites where the Humidtropics and Drylands CRPs have worked on systems issues and apply a similar approach, focusing on the role of livestock within a systems perspective particularly aimed at enhancing resilience for fragile growth trajectories. Focus systems and value chains in priority countries—the ‘integrated field laboratories’ for the CRP are shown in Table 1.3.

The selected value chains are based on business cases developed for the Livestock and Fish CRP, or more recent major programs. Systems sites were chosen through the systematic processes of the Drylands and Humidtropics CRPs. At least three countries will have both ongoing value chain and systems work, offering efficiencies and synergies in terms of resources, as well as encouraging close interactions between the research strands on inclusive sustainable intensification and enhancing resilience. Beyond these, work in other locations will be undertaken to deliver research outputs in relation to particular flagship and cluster priorities, as well as the overall program portfolio. A good example of this type of research is that on poultry genetics, where the rationale for including work on species and locations not among the focus value chains and systems listed below includes:

* The Livestock and Fish CRP had not found a ready business case for immediately considering a focus on a pro-poor poultry value chain when it started given the perceived challenges of research improving on what existing commercial systems already offer, but had certainly not ruled it out, having committed to do more scoping work. Undertaking such a poultry genetics project provides that opportunity.
* The generational cycle for ruminants and pigs is fairly long, which considerably slows down the rate of genetics research. Thus, there are advantages of the much faster cycle with poultry to test different models and to speed up work on genetic approaches.

Further locations may subsequently be considered, identified and prioritized using the approaches from cluster 1 of the Livestock Livelihoods and Agri-Food Systems flagship.

**Table 1.3. Summary of Livestock CRP focus systems and value chains in priority countries**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Country | Value chain | System |
| Burkina Faso | Small ruminant value chain |  |
| Ethiopia | Small ruminant value chain | Enhancing resilience in pastoral systems |
| India | Dairy value chain (TBC) |  |
| Kenya | Dairy and beef value chains | Enhancing resilience in arid and semi-arid lands |
| Nicaragua | Dairy/dual purpose cattle value chain |  |
| Tanzania | Dairy value chain |  |
| Tunisia | Small ruminant value chain | Enhancing resilience in rangelands |
| Uganda | Pig value chain |  |
| Vietnam | Pig value chain | Enhancing resilience in marginal, humid regions |

A key lesson emerging from the Livestock and Fish CRP is that integrated work within a target site can only succeed if there are sufficient human and financial resources to implement the interdisciplinary model and bring the strengths of each flagship to bear. Given the current levels of human and financial resources in the priority countries, efforts to raise new resources for the currently under-resourced Nicaragua and Vietnam will be given precedence, with a similar approach for India and Burkina Faso subsequently phased in. In the absence of new resources, a fully integrated portfolio of research in these countries cannot be undertaken.

## 1.0.11 Program management and governance

**Country coordinators** will be appointed in each priority country. Building on the approach developed under the Livestock and Fish CRP, the CRP flagships—especially the Livestock Livelihoods and Agri-Food Systems flagship—have staff based in CRP priority countries (section 1.0.6). These will work as a country team led by a Livestock CRP country coordinator. A portion of the coordinator’s time and office costs will be paid by CRP management unit to enable internal cross-flagship coordination, planning, reporting and support, to manage relations with partners and stakeholders, to coordinate national resource mobilisation efforts, and lead the CRP’s participation in CGIAR site integration processes. Country coordinators will also participate in the program leadership team and report on this country coordination role to the CRP director. Based on lessons learned by the Livestock and Fish CRP, annual country strategy and implementation plans (see Annex 3.5) will be prepared in consultation with country team members and submitted jointly to the CRP management committee by the country coordinator and flagship leaders.